

# **REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

April 28, 2004

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Chairperson Snodgrass, Commissioners Allen, Dunn, McCarthy, Parnell

**STAFF PRESENT:** Lori Peckol, Dianna Broadie, Gary Lee, Redmond Planning Department

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Gerry Lindsay

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Snodgrass in the Public Safety Building Council Chambers. Commissioner Petitpas was excused.

## **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

## **APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARIES**

- A. February 25, 2004
- B. April 7, 2004
- C. April 21, 2004

All three meeting summaries were approved by acclamation.

## **ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE – None**

## **PUBLIC HEARING AND STUDY SESSION**

2003-2004 Comprehensive Plan Update

– Land Use and Community Character/Historic Preservation Elements

Principal Planner Lori Peckol explained that the proposed update is designed to accomplish a number of objectives, namely to reflect the preferred long-range growth strategy adopted by the Council, the updated vision and framework policies, ideas raised by the Commission and the community, and issues and opportunities facing the city. The update is also intended to make the document more readable and less duplicative.

Senior Planner Dianna Broadie said background information for updating the Community Character/Historic Preservation Element was drawn from the Historic and Cultural Resource and Character and Design policies in the Land Use chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, and ideas generated in community meetings. The update seeks to combine the two chapters into one, remove the regulatory language from the preservation policies, and reformat the chapter and reduce redundancies. Several major policy changes are envisioned, including placing a new

emphasis on equestrian connections, eliminating the equestrian overlay zone study, mapping the public view corridors, and mapping gateways to the city. New concepts folded into the update include the idea of great streets for both traffic and people, the idea of great places.

Ms. Peckol allowed that there is an existing land use vision in place that speaks to many issues, including preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, conservation of agriculture areas, maintaining attractive and high-quality affordable neighborhoods, maintaining commercial and employment centers, and a system of parks, trails and open space. The update does not depart from that foundation, rather it seeks to offer refinements to the land use policies. Changes are proposed for the housing policies that would reduce some of the barriers to the development of innovative housing. Specifically, the proposal would allow cottage housing as a conditional use where they are not already allowed; permit attached single family homes that are deemed to fit in in terms of height and design; and allow for pilot innovative housing projects. The update also would allow residences on the first floor of mixed-use projects in the Neighborhood Commercial zone. The update includes a focus on the compatibility of new housing within existing residential areas.

Continuing, Ms. Peckol said the proposal increases the emphasis on design within the Neighborhood Commercial areas to ensure a proper fit with adjacent uses and neighborhoods. Responding to comments received from the community, the proposal also reflects in the policies the need for compatibility when new businesses locate in Neighborhood Commercial areas.

The proposal as it relates to the economic vitality section includes an additional emphasis on facilities for continuing education, and recognizes advanced technology uses in the Manufacturing Park zone. Updates to the policies related to the General Commercial zone further emphasize the area as the suitable location for uses that are not appropriate for the downtown and the neighborhood commercial zones. The proposal also places a further emphasis on the Downtown as the appropriate location for uses such as hotels, and recommends that new multifamily development in the General Commercial zone be associated with mixed-use developments.

Ms. Peckol said at the open house on April 26 that there were citizens present who commented about opportunities for biotechnology businesses and the infrastructure needs of other hot segments of the economy.

With regard to open space and resource protection, the proposal emphasizes the need for a green buffer along the city's edge where practicable, and gateways where appropriate. There is also an emphasis on retaining agricultural lands, innovative techniques to protect open space, critical areas and natural features. Updates to the transfer of development rights (TDR) policies are included, primarily to reduce duplication and inconsistencies, and to consider the use of transfer rights as part of infill residential development, which would require a change to the Development Guide. There is also a recommendation to remove the current requirement that caps the percentage of the TDR program that can go to any neighborhood. The cap is currently set at 35 percent, but given the number of development rights available, the limit is not that meaningful.

A number of updates are in the proposal that focus on land use designations. Most are focused on formatting and reducing duplication. One major change involves reducing the number of residential land groups from five to three. Ms. Peckol said the staff reviewed the current groupings and concluded that the reasons behind them are not that clear. The proposal seeks to clarify the purpose and make a better fit with the allowed uses in residential zones. Some concerns were raised by the public at the open house, including the notion that the Hearing Examiner/City Council process for considering rezones could result in change that is either too easy or more likely. There were also some positive comments offered regarding the proposed groupings, such as increased opportunities for development of smaller homes and support for the Hearing Examiner/City Council process.

Ms. Peckol provided the Commissioners with copies of written comments from Chris Colt and Joan Fleming concerning the proposed equestrian overlay zone.

Ms. Judy Willman, 12323 209<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, spoke as a member of the King County Executive Horse Council. She noted that she had previously addressed the Commission about the need for Redmond to give serious consideration to planning for equestrian policies to address the concept of urban horse keeping. The community of Bridle Trail is slated for future annexation into the city, and it should be an embarrassment to the city to have an equestrian overlay directive in the Comprehensive Plan, and an equestrian community within the annexation area, while the Commission seeks to delete the policy. The proposed Land Use Element Attachment 1-A states in several ways that the city is interested in maintaining open spaces, natural environments, preservation of rural areas adjacent to the city, and speaks of separating those uses with buffers and setbacks. It even provides a land use plan which would allow horse keeping within the city. It all looks good on paper, but in practicality if the equestrian zone is not created along with best management practices and regulations and development policies, the city will not be prepared to integrate equestrian communities. Horse ownership is big business; nationwide the economic impact of the horse industry adds \$112.1 billion to the domestic product, with fully 25 percent of that amount for recreational horse users. Allowing for horse ownership also maintains a diversity of lifestyles. It has taken years to develop the web of trails in and around the city, all of which is irreplaceable. The Growth Management Act bright line rule of four houses to the acre minimum has exceptions, one of which is major equestrian facilities surrounded by horse acre lots. Redmond has the power to either embrace its surrounding horse communities or destroy them. Policy LU-83(A) should not be deleted, rather the originally envisioned overlay should be created. The cities of SeaTac, Kirkland, Bellevue and Sammamish have done so.

Mr. Curt Bateman, 13315 175<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, indicated general support for the proposed Comprehensive Plan changes. He noted, however, that there is need for more diligence in looking at changes that would allow for innovative housing with the end result of providing more affordable housing. At a recent luncheon sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce at which city staff also participated, some very disturbing numbers were raised. The median price of new homes for sale in Redmond is \$558,950. The median price for the resale of existing homes is \$450,000. With the current 2:1 jobs to housing ratio, most who work in Redmond cannot afford to live in Redmond. Drastic changes need to be made to the existing Comprehensive Plan policies which will allow developers to create projects that will target those who are at or below 100 percent of the King County median income. Infill in existing neighborhoods should be

considered, though it should be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. The issue should be moved forward as quickly as possible.

Chair Snodgrass said the Commission understands the need to bring online more affordable housing in the city. He asked Mr. Bateman if he had specific ideas that should be considered. Mr. Bateman suggested that the right approach for the long term will be to go through each of the existing neighborhoods soliciting input so plans that will be accepted can be developed. The mechanism to allow for the expediting of alternatives is the notion of pilot or demonstration projects. A site should be chosen and something tried to see if it works; if it does, the concepts should be integrated into the various neighborhoods as they evolve. It should not be necessary to go through a two-year process in order to try something new. He allowed that the initial reaction on the part of many will likely be one of fear when considering four-plex units in single family areas. In part that fear will rest on their vision of what a four-plex development looks like. What is needed are fresh approaches with innovative designs that will not change the appearance of the neighborhoods.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner McCarthy, Mr. Bateman said beyond construction there should be opportunity for additional feedback from the public.

Commissioner Allen asked Mr. Bateman if some of the innovative four-plex products he has seen would fit in older neighborhoods such as Grass Lawn and Education Hill, and if regulations could be written to ensure a fit in such neighborhoods. Mr. Bateman said the rooflines and heights are similar, and most people driving by cannot tell the difference. Such units certainly can be integrated into existing neighborhoods.

Ms. Peckol noted that the proposed policy change to allow multi-plex homes in single family neighborhoods would allow such development only as a conditional use. The primary emphasis is on designs that fit the height, bulk, and character of the immediate neighborhood.

Mr. Donald Marcy, 524 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Seattle, spoke on behalf of Microsoft Corporation. Referring to the issues matrix, he called attention to the TDR program and noted that Microsoft has participated often in the purchase and use of TDRs. He supported the suggestion of staff to remove the percentage limitation on the use of TDRs in any receiving area. The current percentage limits are not all that meaningful given the bulk zoning constraints which control development. With regard to the issue of encouraging green parks on top of garage structures, he said Microsoft supports encouraging them but would not support requiring them. The proposal for requiring lower-intensity uses to be compatible with adjacent higher-intensity uses when lower intensity uses such as new homes are developed next to employment areas is a good idea in terms of minimizing conflicts within a neighborhood as it develops. With regard to putting more multifamily uses into the Overlake area, Microsoft is happy to see that occur. The only concern would be over any requirement to include multifamily uses along with office uses. On the topic of the adequacy of the policies to promote development that encourages alternative travel modes, Mr. Macy suggested that there are adequate policies in place, and they are implemented aggressively.

Commissioner Parnell said the Commission would welcome comments from Microsoft about how to encourage green garages without making them mandatory.

Chair Snodgrass suggested that expanding the TDR program to incent other types of programs could cheapen their value by creating an overabundance of TDRs. He asked if that concern is legitimate. Mr. Marcy proposed that the staff suggestion, which would provide for consideration of allowing transfer of TDRs into other zones, including residential where they could be used to create innovative housing types, could create a whole new market for TDRs. Microsoft has traditionally used its TDRs to create additional parking.

Ms. Laura John, 9528 167<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, thanked the Commission for its hard work and time spent in revising the Comprehensive Plan policies. The vision statement is very good, but should include references to environmentally conscious design practices. There should also be some connectiveness between open spaces and the neighborhoods. She indicated support for the pilot and demonstration projects direction but suggested there should be some specific success metrics established up front. She indicated support for the residential land use groupings. There should be an attempt to quantify the fears held by residents so they can be helped to understand that the policies will address those fears. Neighborhoods benefit from having a mixture of housing types, ethnic backgrounds and income levels. There should be language in the plan aimed at making sure new development fits with and embraces the character of the city. Open spaces like pea patches are a very good idea. Support should be given to adding wording that specifically considers the height and character of adjacent homes when considering infill and redevelopment. The policies focused on innovative housing and pilot projects should use “encourage” instead of “allow,” and smaller housing units should be required rather than just incented. Redmond is inventive and creative, and that message should be reinforced in the policies and vision.

Chair Snodgrass declared the public hearing closed.

The study session was kicked off by working to develop a list of issues to be discussed further. For the Community Character element, the issues pulled from the matrix for further discussion were:

- 01, equestrian uses
- 02, great streets
- 05, identification of special places
- 07, green character
- 10, self-sufficiency
- 34, focusing the Comprehensive Plan on making Redmond a people place
- New, indoor public places

As the list was being prepared, Commissioner Allen suggested that the wording of CC-18 lends itself to adding in an encouragement of environmentally sound building practices and the green character of the city.

Commissioner Parnell proposed that the Comprehensive Plan should be focused on making Redmond a people place with buildings and spaces designed on a human scale rather than on an automobile scale. It was agreed that the issue could be tied to Issue 34.

Commissioner Dunn suggested that the map of major gateways and view corridors should be added to the issues table. Ms. Broadie allowed that an inventory will need to be done first; and a public process may also need to be initiated. The topic could be included in the package as a placeholder if the maps cannot be completed within the sequence of the other items in the element. Commissioner Dunn said her vote would be to include the map as a part of the Community Development Guide, and the other Commissioners concurred.

A list of discussion items for the Land Use Element was also developed.

Commissioner Dunn suggested that the Commission should have a full discussion concerning the innovative housing concepts and the goals to be achieved. Some of that time should be spent in developing a definition of innovative housing. Chair Snodgrass disagreed, suggesting that at the Comprehensive Plan level the focus should be on broad terms, leaving the door wide open to the development of regulations. He said the goals are clearly laid out and further discussion would not be useful.

Commissioner Allen said she also is clear with regard to the concept of innovative housing.

Commissioner McCarthy agreed with the notion of leaving the doors wide open to avoid artificially limiting the horizons. Attempts to craft a policy focused on innovative housing could be too limiting in the long run.

The issues pulled from the matrix for further discussion were:

- 01, agricultural policies
- 03, transfer of development rights
- 06, opportunities to stay in touch with Redmond's agricultural heritage, such as pea patches.
- 07(A) and 7(B), low intensity uses next to employment
- 08, Neighborhood Commercial
- 09, policies regarding mixed-use
- 10, definition of the word "adequate" in public facilities and services
- 11, expand to consider non-residential uses for senior services
- 13, 14 neighborhood aesthetics and effectiveness in addressing
- 16, small-scale wineries in semi-rural areas
- 18, drive-through uses
- 21, manufacturing park designation
- 22 through 28 – innovative and infill housing development
- 29, Neighborhood Commercial
- 30, Residential land use designations

Commissioner Parnell suggested that he would like to see air and solar energy treated as land uses. The policies talk about streets and buildable land, but there is nothing said about the

development potential of the airwaves and solar energy, and maximizing the use of the available spectrum for the transfer of information. Chair Snodgrass suggested that before the issue is brought to the table for discussion there should be some attempt to put it in writing as a policy.

Chair Snodgrass said he would never agree to an administrative establishment of residential design standards, an issue that is tied to Issues 13 and 14.

**\*\*BREAK\*\***

Starting with the Community Character element, Commissioner McCarthy began the discussion with Issue 1, whether or not there should be a policy change regarding equestrian uses. Ms. Broadie said the community referenced in the testimony (Bridle Trail) has 20 or 30 homes, each with horse facilities. The area has a Kirkland address and the local residents are desirous of being removed from the Potential Annexation Area for Redmond. Kirkland staff have contacted about annexing the area, and that appears to be a possibility. If that solution is chosen, Redmond would not need an equestrian overlay for that area.

Chair Snodgrass asked if any other areas of Redmond are suitable to horse developments. Ms. Broadie allowed that some areas of North Redmond could be suitable. At the time the current policy was written, the Northstar Stables were in existence. Since then the area has developed with an R-4 density and the stable has been torn down.

Chair Snodgrass said existing policy LU-83 commits the city to considering the equestrian overlay during the update process. The policy is inappropriate in that it directs consideration without any particular driving force for doing so. The possibility of a future overlay, however, should not be precluded. Ms. Broadie said homes on a least one acre could keep horses even without an overlay; the overlay would probably allow for horses on less than an acre, however.

Chair Snodgrass said he could see no demand or need for creating an equestrian overlay. Land is expensive, and in most cases where there is ownership of large parcels of land, the driving force will be to subdivide. He added, however, that he could also see no reason to preclude the possibility of creating an equestrian overlay at some later time should a developer desire to create an equestrian tracts development, which would be very good for the community in many ways.

Commissioner Allen said she would like to know what particulars are included in the equestrian overlays in other jurisdictions.

Commissioner Parnell asked if horses are the only allowed use in equestrian overlays or if llamas and other pack animals are permitted as well. Ms. Broadie said the municipal code allows for keeping other animals.

Commissioner Parnell asked what the city could do to be forward thinking about preserving existing trails within the areas of potential overlay. Ms. Broadie allowed that to some extent the Parks, Recreation and Open Space plan addresses the preservation of trails, primarily soft-surface trails that horses need.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if the neighborhood interested in being annexed by Kirkland instead of Redmond would change their thinking if Redmond were to establish an equestrian overlay. Ms. Broadie said that is a possibility. In closing, the Commission asked Ms. Broadie to provide information on equestrian overlay zones from other jurisdictions.

## **STUDY SESSION**

### **2003-2004 Comprehensive Plan Update – Downtown Element**

Commissioner Dunn outlined the issues to be discussed, noting that the element should be ready to finalize at the next study session.

Chair Snodgrass asked if it would make sense to put off finalizing the Downtown Element until the Transportation Element is completed to see if any additional tweaking will be necessary. Ms. Peckol allowed that the Downtown Element will not be forwarded to the Council independent of the other elements. If additional revisions to the Downtown Element are necessary after work on the Transportation Element is completed, they could still be made.

With regard to the Redmond retail commercial floor area cap, Issue 29, Policy DT-41, there was agreement that the policy should read “Encourage development of residential uses by maintaining the maximum commercial building area for the Town Center of 1,490,000 square feet without the transfer of development rights, or 1,800,000 square feet with the use of transfer of development rights.”

Turning to the allowed uses in Perrigo Plat, policies DT-60.1 and DT-61, Commissioner Dunn noted that the current Comprehensive Plan language allows for commercial uses in the district. The staff proposal, however, does not appear to. Policy DT-60.1, the revised policy that addresses that concern, reads “Allow general services uses as part of the ground floor of residential developments when the non-residential use is...” Commissioner Dunn asked why the term “general services” should be used in place of “commercial services.” Senior Planner Gary Lee said there is a definition in the land use regulations for “general services,” but there is no definition for “commercial services.” The general services definition is very broadly construed but excludes retail. Commissioner Dunn suggested that “general services” could be construed to be more restrictive.

Chair Snodgrass asked if the wording change would change the permitted uses in the River Trail neighborhood. Mr. Lee answered that it would not. He said River Trail is designated in the Comprehensive Plan as part of the Downtown neighborhood, but the zoning will remain the same, and it is the zoning that dictates the allowed uses.

Answering a question asked by Chair Snodgrass, Mr. Lee explained that existing bungalows and single family structures would be permitted to house office uses. Policy DT-60.1 refers to new mixed-use developments, not the reapplication of existing developments.



Commissioner Dunn said she would like to consider revising the policy to limit uses to other than the ground floor. There may be cases where an office on a second floor could be suitable, or on a first and second floor if an adjacent building had residential on the first and second floor as well. The policy should instead focus on where general services uses are secondary to a primary residential use. The actual configuration of buildings should be a regulatory function.

Chair Snodgrass pointed out that the purpose behind limiting general services uses to the ground floor is to encourage residential in mixed-use projects. Ground floor locations are less desirable for residential, and general services uses on the ground floor provides life to the street. If the residential uses are delimited, there will be a tendency to develop the spaces for non-residential uses. Mr. Lee agreed. He said the interest of the City is for the area to be primarily residential.

Commissioner Allen said her original thinking was that the area would be primarily for residential development, and that any commercial uses would be allowed only in existing residential structures. Allowing general services beyond the ground floor would compromise the desired outcome, and would fly in the face of incenting primarily residential uses for the area.

Chair Snodgrass and Commissioners McCarthy and Parnell agreed with the notion of limiting services uses to the first floor.

Commissioner Dunn called attention next to Bear Creek Parkway and the last bullet under Policy DT-40. Mr. Lee distributed a sheet outlining changes to the policy as previously requested by Chair Snodgrass.

Chair Snodgrass said if Bear Creek Parkway is to become a five-lane facility, the Commission will need to plug that configuration into the model before making a final recommendation for the Comprehensive Plan language.

With regard to the urban village concept, Policy DT-46, Commissioner Dunn said the initial concerns were with regard to a net reduction in the number of parking spaces given that the urban village concept is being proposed for Convenience Commercial, which is an auto zone. There were also concerns about auto access. Mr. Lee proposed adding the phrase "...on-site parking requirements are maintained at the Convenience Commercial ratio for the district..." The three Convenience Commercial districts all have a higher minimum and maximum parking requirement, and by including the phrase the district would not be allowed to have less parking.

Ms. Peckol observed that the urban village concept involves developments that could result in less of a need for parking. She asked if the intent of the Commission was to retain the same level of parking required for the more auto-oriented conditions. Commissioner McCarthy said his original concern with the parking had to do with the loss of places to park and the disruption that would go on during the creation of the new entity. He agreed that that is an issue for the market to bear, however.

Commissioner Parnell held that there is plenty of parking and no need to talk about preserving it in the same way the city needs to preserve wildlife habitat. The Convenience Commercial areas

will likely densify over the next twenty years, and the city should be moving toward encouraging people to walk as much as possible to shops.

Chair Snodgrass said the other side of the coin is the fact that there are many who do not live within walking distance of a grocery store. Those people will need a place to park. He added that by shrinking the Convenience Commercial areas the likelihood of seeing an urban village development are small anyway. He said he would not do anything to lower the parking ratios because there is and will continue to be a need for it.

Commissioner Allen concurred. She said it would be one thing to move toward reducing the parking ratios if the city were better served by transit, but the fact is it is not.

Commissioners McCarthy and Dunn indicated support for the language proposed by staff.

**REPORTS – None**

**SCHEDULING/TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING(S)**

Ms. Peckol said the topics for the next meeting would be the Downtown transit center, and further discussion and direction on the Land Use and Community Character elements.

Chair Snodgrass informed the Commissioners that he talked with staff about including in the reports to the Commission information about the decisions being made by the Hearing Examiner.

**ADJOURN**

Chair Snodgrass adjourned the meeting at 9:39 p.m.

Minutes Approved On:

Recording Secretary:

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